

# **BIRD-WINDOW COLLISION PROTOCOL**

Downtown Rochester | Fall 2025

## **OVERVIEW**

You will be participating in a pilot study of bird-window collisions in downtown Rochester—the second location of an ongoing university-community initiative called *Smash the Crash*. This study will commence on Monday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, and continue through Friday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, with the possibility of extension based on preliminary results and bird migration patterns.

During this time, you will join a team of volunteer researchers to survey a sample of twelve buildings along two routes in the downtown area. You will look for signs of window collisions, including whole and partial carcasses. Surveys will occur every day of the week in the morning or afternoon, but you will only survey 1-2 days of the week, on the route you are assigned. You will gather data on the location of collision and the species of bird that you have found. At the conclusion of the survey, we will use our data you gathered to grasp the extent of the bird-window collision problem in downtown Rochester and recommend bird-safe treatments that will help our city leaders protect bird populations.

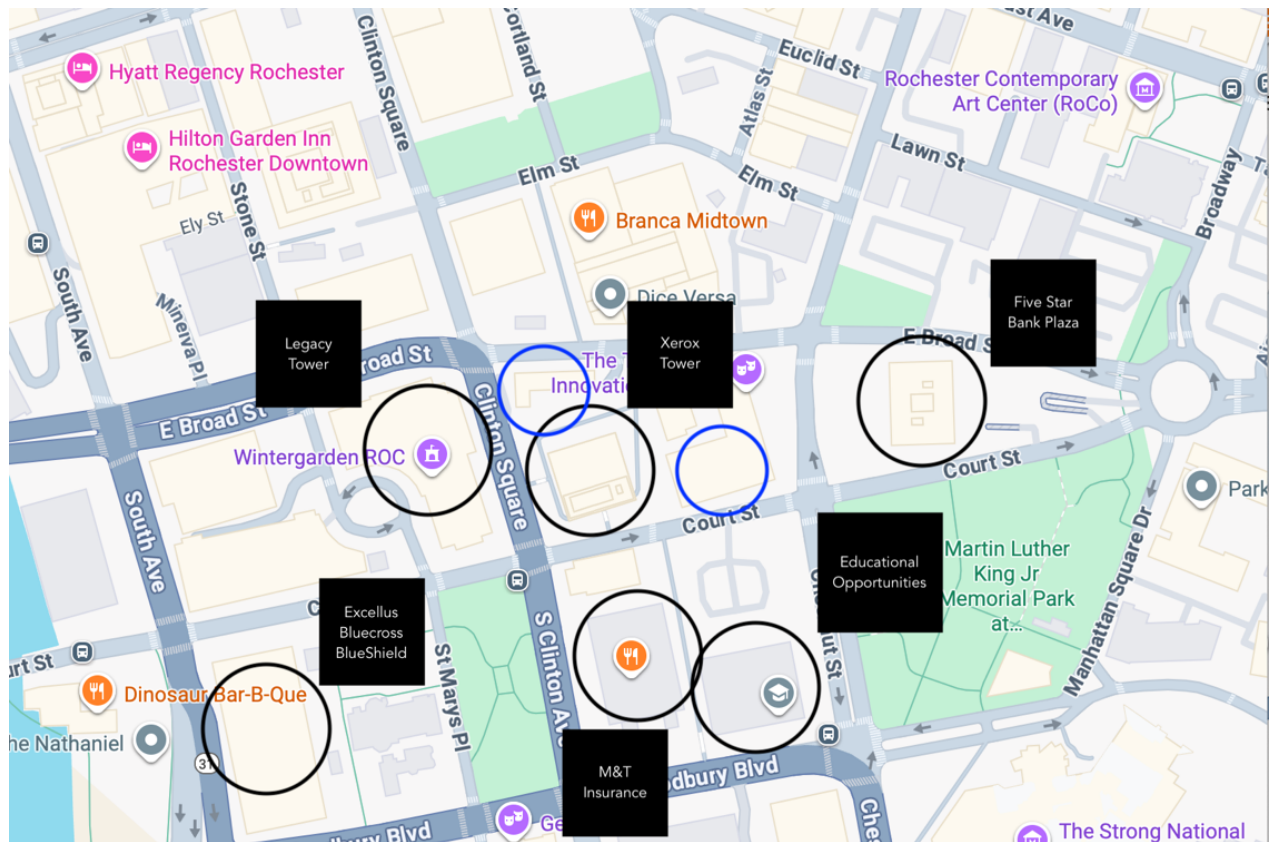
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## SURVEY PROTOCOL

For this pilot study, we will survey twelve buildings in downtown Rochester that anecdotal reports, preliminary data, and expert assessment suggest are likely to be the most lethal to birds. They are named, mapped, and numbered below—black circles surround the required buildings (the black boxes nearby name them) and blue circles indicate optional buildings if you have time and wish to survey more of them.

### Route One

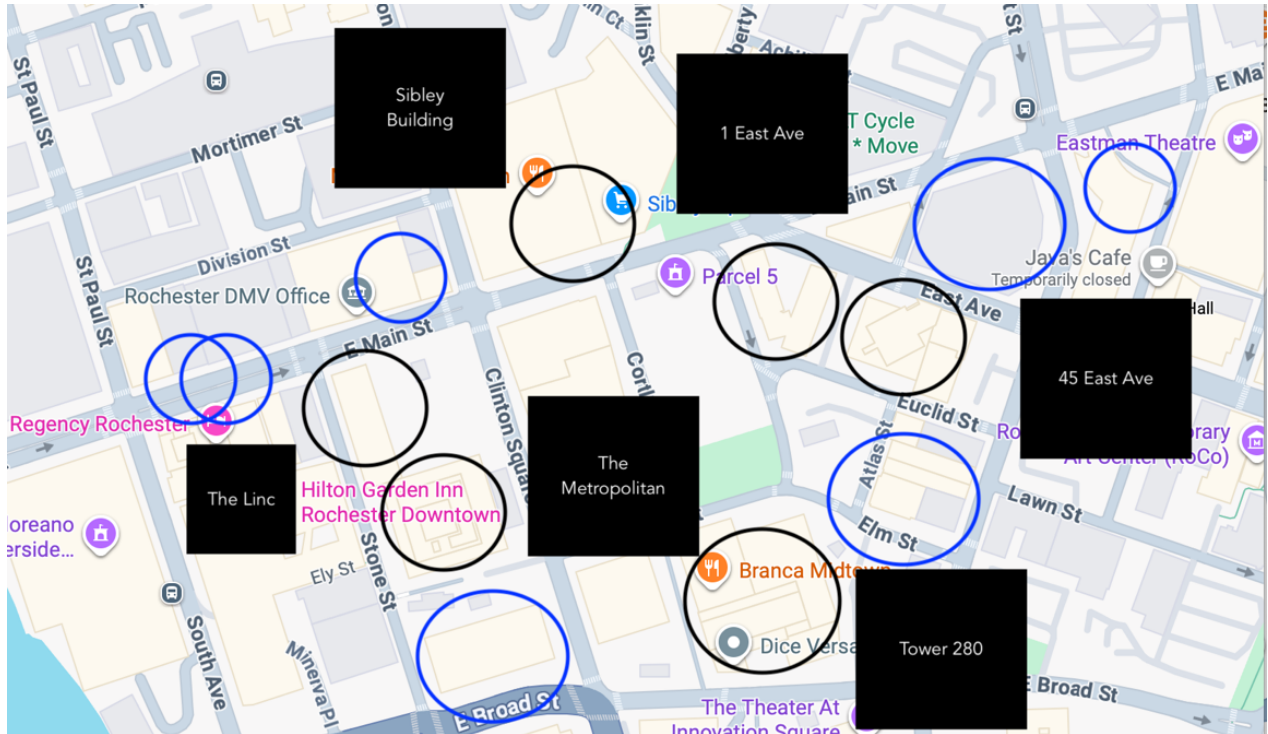


- Building 1 Five Star Bank Plaza (100 Chestnut St.)
- Building 2 Xerox Tower (100 S. Clinton Ave.)
- Building 3 M&T Bank (180 S. Clinton Ave.)
- Building 4 Rochester Educational Opportunities Center (161 Chestnut St.)
- Building 5 Legacy Tower (1 Bausch and Lomb Pl.)
- Building 6 Excellus BlueCross BlueShield (165 Court St.)
  
- Optional 1 Innovation Square (131 Chestnut St.)
- Optional 2 Farmhouse Table Midtown (90 S. Clinton Ave.)

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## Route Two



- Building 1 Tower 280 (280 E. Broad St.)
- Building 2 The Metropolitan (1 S. Clinton Ave.)
- Building 3 The Linc (183 E. Main St.)
- Building 4 Sibley Square (260 E. Main St.)
- Building 5 1 East Ave.
- Building 6 45 East Ave.
  
- Optional 1 Clinton Square (75 S. Clinton Ave.)
- Optional 2 Seneca Building (60 S. Clinton Ave.)
- Optional 3 150 Main St.
- Optional 4 Social Security Administration (200 Main St.)
- Optional 5 Courthouse (50 East Ave.)
- Optional 6 Miller Center (25 Gibbs St.)
- Optional 7 88 on Elm (88 Elm St.)

We will survey each building every day of the week between Monday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, and Friday, October 31<sup>st</sup>. This will allow us to develop a reasonable estimate of the number of birds that collide into windows during fall migration, the largest period of bird-window collisions annually (at least nationally). Although species move at different times, birds in the *Passeri* suborder, or songbirds, are known to be most

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vulnerable to window collisions, and the majority of songbird migration will occur in this span of time.

Surveys will occur anytime between 7 AM and 4 PM. Studies have shown that the majority of collisions occur between 7 and 11 AM and that scavengers (e.g., cats, squirrels, dogs, groundhogs, and birds of prey) tend to avoid taking carcasses until dusk or later (we will use 4 PM as our proxy for dusk). Surveying within this time window will help us develop a fuller picture of collisions. You can choose to survey at whatever time works for you, but please note what time you do survey each week, particularly if it varies.

You will be assigned one route above. Working individually or in pairs, you will walk the perimeter of each building along your route. You can cover the buildings along your route in whatever order you choose as long as you survey all six. You do need to survey the optional buildings. Prepare to spend at least sixty minutes for each route. The schedule with research pairings and building assignments will be made available. If you cannot make it to your assigned route that week, we kindly ask that you find a replacement. If you cannot find anyone to replace you, please tell the study coordinators so we know no survey occurred.

During the walk, you will scan for evidence of window collisions. The most obvious sign will be a carcass, but you might also find powder down, feather piles, or bodily fluids on the ground or on nearby windows. Something is always better than nothing; we can always filter out data later. Scanning of the building should extend roughly six feet from the walls. Pay close attention to shrubbery and look carefully through ground cover, especially as leaves fall in the coming weeks.

We will not be collecting carcasses. Instead, you will take photos from at least two angles: dorsal (top) and lateral (side). You may also take a ventral (stomach) and/or a “scene” photo to help give us context for why the collision might have happened at that location. You might wish to use gloves or a stick to position the bird. This will help with species identification. Field guides (e.g., the *Field Guide to Eastern Birds* or National Geographic’s *Field Guide to the Birds of North America*) can aid with it. You could also use Merlin ID, iNaturalist, or Google Image. If you are uncertain, please contact the study coordinators. When you are done with your photographs, you should leave the carcass where you found it. Leaving it intact will help us avoid duplicate counts and legal issues with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

You will record the following in the event that you find evidence of a collision: the location (including the building name and façade), the day and time of observation, your name, and the species. You will upload these data using the Survey123 link on the website. All other circumstantial observations should be recorded (e.g., weather

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conditions, particular injuries, uncertain findings, etc.). *In the event that you do not find any evidence on your patrol, you do not need to do anything.*

On occasion, you might find an injured bird or witness a collision yourself. If this happens, please follow FLAP Canada's [protocol](#) for handling injured birds and/or call one of the two wildlife rehabilitators listed below. Do NOT handle birds of prey.

Charlotte "Charli" Rohack	409.974.1840
Kris Forsythe-King	315.374.4542

### **PRIVACY, SAFETY, & OTHER CONCERNS**

Please respect the privacy of building occupants. It is important that you remain quiet and do not peer into windows.

Do not use your cell phones except to take photos and upload data. This will not only distract from the survey but also potentially disrupt building occupants. If you have to use your phone for a call or text, please pause and resume the survey when you have finished.

As you monitor the buildings for evidence of collisions, you might get odd looks or curious inquiries. Consider this an opportunity to educate others about the problem. You can hand someone a brochure, direct them to our website, or suggest they email the study coordinators. If anyone harasses you, please notify the study coordinator.

Handling live or dead birds for the purpose of photographs or rehabilitation entails a degree of risk around zoonotic disease transmission. Always wear gloves, particularly if you have any open wounds. Wash your hands with sanitizer after.

It is possible that you might find a bat during your survey, either on the ground or low on a building. Bats might carry rabies, so it is important that you leave it alone and contact the survey coordinator for assistance.

*Be aware of inclement weather and other adverse environmental conditions.* If bad weather is predicted during the scheduled time, please go earlier, or later, and note this in your report. *Your safety is paramount; please do not survey if you do not feel safe.* You are welcome to survey in a pair if you wish.

### **SUPPLIES**

Please bring the following: 1) a smart phone or digital camera (a smart phone is preferred so that you can upload your data immediately); 2) disposable gloves; 3) brown paper bags; and 4) hand sanitizer.

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## **PARKING**

On the weekends, there is free street parking as well as free parking in all of the city garages; the two closest to the routes are the Mortimer Street Garage and the South Avenue Garage.

During the week, you can find and pay for street parking. You can also use one of the downtown city garages or one of the independent paid lots, including the East End Garage, LAZ Parking (Washington Square Garage), and Midtown Garage. You can also find a free public parking lot at the end of Marshall St. by Wadsworth Park and take the pedestrian bridge. There is also free 2-hour street parking on Gibbs St. between University and Delevan.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This document was adapted from the protocol developed by Hager and Cosentino (2014) and later developed further by the [Duke University Bird Collision Project](#). It also draws on protocols made by [FLAP Canada](#) and the [American Bird Conservancy](#) for building monitoring.